

Berta And Josef Ginz And Their Children



This is a picture of my father's family. It was taken in 1904 in Prague and from the left there is my father Otto, his mother Berta Ginzova, his sister Anna, his brother Emil, his sister Herma, his father Josef Ginz and his brother Viktor. My grandfather on my father's side was named Josef Gunz, and was born in 1857 in Barchovice. According to his birth certificate, he was circumcised at birth. His father was named Filip Gunz and was a merchant, his mother was Estera, nee Pickova, and came from Lesna. Later, grandpa 'Czechified' his name, and changed the 'u' with an umlaut to an 'i'. So my father's last name was already Ginz. Grandma was named Berta, nee Stastna. She was born in 1866 in central Bohemia. From my grandfather's birth certificate, it's obvious that my grandparents and their parents were merchants. I don't know how religious they were, and how much they observed Jewish customs, but I imagine that Jews in those days were all very religious. My grandparents lived in Zdanice, near Prague. In the beginning my grandpa was a teacher, but then, I don't know at what point in his life, he began to deal in antiques. He opened an antique store, at first in Kostelec nad Cernymi Lesy, and then he moved with his family to Prague, and opened an antique store on Jungmannovo Namesti [Jungmann Square] in Prague. According to various letters, notes, pictures and what I had heard from my father, my grandfather was a very educated person, though I don't know where he came by his education; most likely he was self-taught. Grandpa also knew many languages and was very intelligent and had a talent for art. I have several pictures that he himself painted and that look like they were done by a professional artist. He also wrote poetry, and I have part of his business correspondence written in verse in German and also in Czech. Besides artistic talents, my grandfather also showed a talent for business. When he died in the year 1912, at a relatively young age, he left behind an extensive collection of antiques and an estate large enough to enable his wife and five children to lead a comfortable life. This could have lasted up to her death, but unfortunately the Nazi regime severed this beautiful family. My grandparents had five children. The oldest daughter, Herma, was born in 1890, two years later came a son, Viktor, who was nicknamed Slava. Two years on, a daughter, Anna, was born. Then came my father, Otto, and finally, in 1898, the last son, Emil. None of these siblings or their families survived

the concentration camps, only my father, I and Emil's daughter Hana were saved.